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ABSTRACT

Colorado Senate Bill 00-71 and S.B. 00-124 established the Read-to-Achieve Grant Program. The purpose of the program is to solicit proposals from any elementary school, including a charter school, or consortium of schools, to fund research-based intensive reading programs. The funding opportunity was designed specifically for second and third grade students and students between third and fourth grades whose literacy and reading comprehension skills are below the level established by the State Board of Education in the Colorado Basic Literacy Act (CBLA). In fiscal year 2000/2001, the program received a total appropriation from the Tobacco Settlement Funds of $15,895,687--99% of the funds have been distributed directly to schools implementing intensive reading programs through Read-to-Achieve grants. One of the main principles of the program is to ensure accountability for the planned and actual use of the funds. A comprehensive review process involving 222 trained reviewers from across Colorado with expertise in reading and school-based reform was used to make sure research-based programs were in place in funded schools. Detailed feedback was provided to all 817 applicants for these funds. This annual report consists of the following: Executive Summary; Background; Part 1: Implementation of Grant Program; and Part 2: Evaluation of Program. (Includes 2 tables. Contains three attachments: Rules for the Administration of the Read-to-Achieve Program; Read-to-Achieve Board; and Sample Feedback Document.) (NKA)

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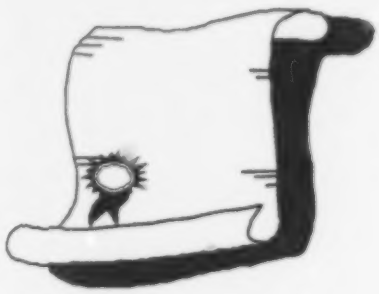

READ-TO-ACHIEVE GRANT PROGRAM

Pursuant to Senate Bills 00-124 & 00-71
(22-7-506 C.R.S.)

Annual Report To the Colorado Department Of Public Health and Environment November 1, 2001

Issued by the

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The Colorado Department of Education dedicates itself to increasing achievement levels for all students through comprehensive programs of education reform involving three interlocking elements: A) High Standards for what students must know and be able to do; B) Tough Assessments that honestly measure whether or not students meet standards and tell citizens the truth about how well our schools serve children; C) Rigorous Accountability Measures that tie the accreditation of school districts to high student achievement.

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1. Attachment A: Rules for the Administration of the Read-to-Achieve Program
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3. Attachment C: Sample Feedback Document

Executive Summary

During the 2000/2001 school year, the Read-to-Achieve Grant program successfully accomplished the goals established in the legislation creating the program (22-7-506 C.R.S.). All statutory requirements were addressed, rules were established, and local grants were distributed. The Read-to-Achieve Board provided oversight for all activities of the program. The Colorado Department of Education Competitive Grants Unit administered the program.

The purpose of the program is to solicit proposals from any elementary school, including a charter school, or consortium of schools, to fund research-based intensive reading programs. The funding opportunity was designed specifically for second and third grade students and students between third and fourth grades whose literacy and reading comprehension skills are below the level established by the State Board of Education in the Colorado Basic Literacy Act (CBLA).

In FY 2000/2001, the Read-to-Achieve Grant program received a total appropriation from the Tobacco Settlement Funds of $15,045,687. Ninety-nine percent of the funds have been distributed directly to schools implementing intensive reading programs through Read-to-Achieve grants ($14,895,687). One percent of the funds, as stipulated by statute, were used for administrative costs, including training and support for grant applicants, external evaluation, and ongoing support and networking of grant recipients. A small amount of the administrative allocation ($16,954.60) was unspent.

During FY 2000/2001, the Read-to-Achieve Grant program awarded grants to 550 schools across the state (out of 817 submissions) providing services to almost 28,000 students. This represents funding for 75% of the students at grades 2 and 3 who are on Individualized Literacy Plans (ILPs). Data confirm that distribution closely parallels both the overall student population across the state and numbers of students on Individual Literacy Plans (ILPs).

A comprehensive review process involving 222 trained reviewers from across Colorado with expertise in reading and school-based reform was used to make sure research-based programs were in place in funded schools. Detailed feedback was provided to all 817 applicants for these funds. Colorado Department of Education staff provided extensive support in planning and implementing intensive reading instruction through regional trainings, web-based support, timely consultation, and step-by-step guides.

One of the main principles of the Read-to-Achieve Grants program is to ensure accountability for the planned and actual use of the funds. The Department has contracted an external evaluator to implement a comprehensive evaluation that addresses each of the statutory requirements for evaluation and reporting, provides clear expectations for grantees, works within a parameter of using no more than 1% of the budgeted time from each grant, and provides support structures for completing evaluation requirements.

This report is submitted to the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment to detail progress made in implementing the Read-to-Achieve Grants program from July 1, 2000 through June 30, 2001. The report is divided into three sections: background, program implementation, and program evaluation.

Background

Senate Bill 00-71 and S.B. 00-124 established the Read-to-Achieve Grant program. The resulting legislation enacted by the General Assembly is 22-7-506 Colorado Revised Statutes (C.R.S.).

The Tobacco Litigation Settlement Cash Fund provides an ongoing source of funds for the program. By statute, 19 percent of the Settlement Cash Fund is appropriated annually to the Read-to-Achieve Cash Fund, with a maximum annual appropriation of $19 million. In addition, S.B. 00-124 included a FY 1999/2000 appropriation of $7.0 million from the General Fund. Table 1 shows the actual and anticipated funding for the program for the next several years. Ninety-nine percent of the funds have been distributed directly to schools implementing intensive reading programs through Read-to-Achieve grants. One percent of the funds, as stipulated by statute, were retained for administrative costs, including training and support for grant applicants, external evaluation, and ongoing support and networking of grant recipients. A small amount of the administrative allocation ($16,954.60) was unspent.

Purpose of Program

The purpose of the program is to solicit proposals from any elementary school, including a charter school, or consortium of schools, to fund research-based intensive reading programs. The funding opportunity was designed specifically for second and third grade students and students between third and fourth grades whose literacy and reading comprehension skills are below the level established by the State Board of Education in the Colorado Basic Literacy Act (CBLA). Funded activities can include reading academies for intensive reading instruction, after-school literacy programs, summer school clinics, tutoring, and extended-day reading programs.

Rules for Administering Grant Program

The State Board of Education is responsible for promulgating rules for the grant, including application procedures, criteria for selecting schools and determining grant amounts, and processes to evaluate the success of the programs operated by grant recipients. See Attachment A for a copy of the Rules for Administration. The Department of Education administers the grant. Please note: The State Board Rules default to the criteria within the Read-to-Achieve statute and the Request for Proposal (RFP) available on the Colorado Department of Education website at http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdecomp/r2a_app.htm.

Each elementary school applying for funds has addressed specific expectations within the scoring guide including the requirement that 25% of the students involved in the program meet the reading standard within the first granting period. All of the requirements for receiving these dollars relate directly to the expectations of the Colorado Basic Literacy Act (CBLA) - 22-7-501 through 22-7-505 Colorado Revised Statutes (C.R.S.)

TABLE 1 SUMMARY - READ TO ACHIEVE FUNDED GRANTS
Round 1 and Round 2
Budget & Cash Projections

	YEAR 1-Round 1 Jan. 1, 2001 - June 30, 2002 (18 Months)	YEAR 1-Round 2 July 1, 2001 - June 30, 2002 (12 Months)	YEAR 2 July 1, 2002 - June 30, 2003 (12 Months)	YEAR 3 July 1, 2003 - June 30, 2004 (12 Months)	TOTAL
Number of Grants	415	138			
Approved or Projected Grants					
Approved-Round 1	$26,964,195				$26,964,195
Approved-Round 2		6,548,575			$6,548,575
Projected-Round 1			$16,997,570	$15,967,778	$32,965,348
Projected-Round 2			4,456,000	4,865,870	$9,321,870
Total App. or Proj. Grants					$75,799,988
Appropriation Dollars Available					
FY 2000-01 & FY 2001-02	$36,264,787				
FY 2002-03			$19,958,952		
FY 2003-04				$19,958,952	
Total Dollars Available					$76,182,691
Available Balance	$9,300,592	$2,752,017	$1,257,399	$382,703	$382,703

Fiscal Years 2000-01 and 2001-02 appropriation years are used to fund Round 1 and Round 2.

Fiscal Year 2000-01 Appropriation*	$18,849,309
Fiscal Year 2001-02 Appropriation**	$17,415,478
Fiscal Year 2002-03 Appropriation***	$19,958,952
Fiscal Year 2003-04 Appropriation***	$19,958,952
Total	$76,182,691

*FY 2000-01 includes $14,895,687 Tobacco Revenue (reduced by $149,990 administrative funds) and $3,953,622 Cash Funds
**FY 2001-02 includes $16,275,003 Tobacco Revenue (reduced by $164,394 administrative funds) and $1,140,475 Cash Funds
***FY 2002-03 includes $19,000,000 Tobacco Revenue and $958,952 Cash Funds
****FY 2003-04 includes $19,000,000 Tobacco Revenue and $958,952 Cash Funds

PER PUPIL AMOUNTS

Round 1		Round 2	
Total Students	21,011	Total Students	6,873
Minimum	$115	Minimum	$352
Maximum	$1,650	Maximum	$1,100
Average	$1,284	Average	$934

Role of Read-to-Achieve Board

The program is administered under the direction of the Read-to-Achieve Board, which consists of 11 members representing education at both the state and local levels, both houses of the General Assembly, and parents of children who may participate in the program. See Attachment B for a listing of Board members. To meet the legislative intent of the Read-to-Achieve Grant program (22-7-506 C.R.S.), the Board in partnership with the Colorado Department of Education is responsible for the following goals:

Goal 1: Provide additional intensive reading services to all second and third graders on Individual Literacy Plans (ILPs) so that they will be proficient readers by the end of third grade.

Goal 2: Collect and review applications for Read-to-Achieve grants.

Goal 3: Recommend to the State Board of Education the schools that should receive grants as well as the duration and amount of each grant.

Goal 4: Determine continued funding of grants based on adequate progress during granting period, e.g., grantee meets the goals established in the grant application including demonstration that at least 25% of the students enrolled for the prior year met the reading standard.

Goal 5: Report to the Governor and to the General Assembly on the effectiveness of the program by February 1, 2004.

Part 1: Implementation of Grant Program

Distribution of Grant Dollars

The Read-to-Achieve Board began meeting in August 2000 to develop a Request for Proposal (RFP) and scoring rubric for distribution of dollars to local schools that met the specifications of the legislation. By September 2000, the application information was distributed to all local school districts and made available on the Colorado Department of Education website at http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdecomp/r2a_app.htm.

The first round of grant applications for Read-to-Achieve dollars was received by the Department of Education in November 2000. Schools were allowed to request funding for up to three periods. The first funding period covered 18 months, from January 2001 through June 2002, and the remaining two periods covered subsequent fiscal years (2003 and 2004). The Department received 605 applications and awarded grants to 414 schools in January 2001 to provide services to almost 21,000 students. In total, over $26 million was granted out of more than $36 million available for the period January 2001 through June 2002, with a statewide average grant per student of $1,284. A listing of Round 1 grant recipients is available on the website.

The second round of grant applications for Read-to-Achieve funding was received by the Department of Education in May 2001. Schools were allowed to request funding for up to three periods. The first funding period for these grants covered a 12-month period from June 2001 through June 2002. The Department received 212 applications and awarded grants to 138 schools. In Round 2, the statewide average grant per student was $934. A listing of Round 2 grant recipients is available on the website.

In total, Read-to-Achieve has awarded grants to 550 schools across the state providing services to almost 28,000 students. This represents funding for 75% of the students at grades 2 and 3 who are on Individualized Literacy Plans (ILPs).

Support for Local Applicants

During Round 1 (Fall 2000), all schools applying for Read-to-Achieve grants had access to regional grant training sessions (held in 8 locations across the state). Training modules were also available on the CDE website. In addition, applicants had access to a "just in time" consultant contracted by the Department to provide support in the planning of these applications as well as feedback (based on the scoring rubrics) on drafts of applications. This support was well received by local educators.

In Round 2 (Spring 2001), two additional supports were added. Examples are available on the Read-to-Achieve website of sections from grant applications that were scored at a highly fundable level. Another means of assistance available on the website and at each regional training session was the Guide to Writing a Successful Application. This step-by-step guide was developed primarily to meet the needs of small, rural schools that were less successful during the first round. The Guide has been well received by applicants across the state.

Grant Review Process

Grant applications during the past year were reviewed through a comprehensive review process involving 222 trained reviewers from across Colorado. The three-person review teams consisted of superintendents, principals, teachers, and others with expertise in reading and school-based reform. Each reviewer participated in the same training available to applicants and in scoring trials prior to the actual review. To further assure inter-rater reliability, each team read and scored three grants in common. Statistical calculations were performed to ensure validity and reliability of scores.

Each application was required to meet a quality standard of 49 points (out of 74 total points). The teams determined the applications meeting the quality standard and provided recommended funding amounts. The Read-to-Achieve Board made final recommendations to the State Board for funding.

The format and content of the Read-to-Achieve applications closely parallel the expectations for other grant opportunities available through state and federal funding administered by the Department of Education. Each grant uses an explicit scoring guide or rubric to guide reviewers. Components related to needs assessment, student achievement goals, action planning, budgeting, and sustainability include wording and content that are consistent across funding sources. This consistency is intended to assist local schools in completing grant expectations in a focused, timely, and effective manner.

Regional Distribution

The following table shows the regional distribution of grant funds. The Statute requires the Read-to-Achieve Board to ensure, to the extent possible, that grants are awarded to schools in a variety of geographic areas of the State. The Board worked to assure that at least 50% of those requesting funds from each region were funded. Data from Round 1 show that funding distribution closely parallels both the overall student population across the state and numbers of students on Individual Literacy Plans (ILPs). Round 2 data continued this equitable distribution pattern.

Table 2.

Distribution of Read-to-Achieve Funds Among Education Regions
First Funding Period (January 2001 – June 2002)

	Grant Awards		Eligible Students	
Region	Amount	Percent	Number	Percent
Metro	$15,904,000	59%	20,467	55%
North Central	$2,910,000	11%	4,897	13%
Northeast	$394,000	1%	529	2%
Northwest	$1,738,000	6%	1,667	4%
Pikes Peak	$2,728,000	10%	4,591	12%
Southeast	$1,923,000	7%	2,650	7%
Southwest	$426,000	2%	1,202	3%
West Central	$941,000	4%	1,573	4%
Total	$26,964,000	100%	37,576	100%

Feedback Regarding Ongoing Support and Networking of Schools

A brief summary of ongoing activities and trainings provided for Read-to-Achieve participants documents the support and networking available to schools as well as feedback regarding effectiveness.

September 2000 – Reading Summit

School personnel from around the state came together before the application process. Participants learned about research-based practices, heard Barbara Taylor, a national expert on instructional practices that make a difference in literacy, and gained new information on successful strategies being used in schools across Colorado. There were 11 breakout sessions available that discussed essential elements for implementing successful reading intervention programs (e.g., leveraging resources, using data) and best practices in literacy instruction. Participants consistently praised the new information they received and the perspectives around best practices.

September 2000 - Grant Writing Training

The Colorado Department of Education provided grant writing training in 8 regions of the state. Locations wre Pueblo, Niwot, Arvada, Pagosa Springs, Montrose, Eagle, Haxtun and Colorado Springs. In total, 545 participants attended. The average participant rating on the workshop content standards was 4.68 on a 5-point scale. Participants indicated a thorough understanding of the intent and purpose of the grant as well as application expectations. After the training, participants had access to "just in time" consultants who answered questions and reviewed grant proposals to help ensure quality based on scoring rubrics for each section of the application.

November 2000 - Reader Training

The 138 reviewers (46 teams) for Read-to-Achieve grant applications were comprised of superintendents, principals, teachers and other experts in literacy and school based reform. Training included a walk-through of the application and scoring rubric, focus on issues schools encounter in completing applications, hands-on practice scoring (building inter-rater reliability), as well as discussion of bias, conflict of interest, and confidentiality requirements. Reader feedback included primarily 4 or 5 ratings on a 5 point scale. Readers stated that using the rubrics to score helped insure consistency. Comments indicated that the process worked well and was fair. A number of readers also pointed out new clarity of understanding related to the purpose, parameters, and context of the Read-to-Achieve grant program.

November 2000 – Read-to-Achieve Reader Review

The 138 trained reviewers from around the state came together to review 605 applications and make recommendations to the Read-to-Achieve Board on funding decisions. Reviewers spent the day in teams of three to review applications. Many readers commented that the training provided was exceedingly beneficial to their work. These readers also noted that reading a variety of grants from the various schools would help them when they applied for future grants. One request by readers was for exemplar grants they could review as examples of quality work.

April 2001 – Grant Writing Training for Round 2

Grant training was provided in 8 locations around the state. A step-by-step guide was used in the grant writing workshops. Participants consistently rated the sessions highly and often pointed out how much they appreciated the specific concrete information that was presented. One participant commented, "Training sub-divided requirements of a grant into a comfortable attainable task ..." Another said, "This presentation dug deeper and provided clarification to an already well-written document. The additional support will be beneficial when writing the grant." A total of 264 participants attended, representing 163 schools.

April 2001 – Regional Networking Days

Between April 2 and 12, Networking Days took place in each of the 8 regions of the state. Participants from Round 1 funded Read-to-Achieve schools were able to spend time together talking about their program successes and challenges. Participants indicated the Read-to-Achieve monies were generally being used for: summer school programs, intensive tutoring, mentoring, literacy labs, literacy coaches, reading specialists, parent training, staff development, reading clinics, guided reading materials and take-home books.

A number of different programs are being used to meet schools' individual goals and reading needs. Some examples of these programs are: SOAR to Success, Accelerated Reading, Guided Reading Approaches, Learning Network, LindaMood Bell, Open Court, Accelerated Reader, Scholastic Reading Counts, Fast Forward, Tactile Visual Phonics, HOSTS, Carbo, and National Literacy Coalition.

Each school is focusing on specific needs of their students based on ongoing assessment. Following are some of the assessments schools are using: Developmental Reading Assessment (DRA), Individualized Reading Inventories (IRA), Star Assessment and Northwest Evaluation Association (NWEA) Levels Tests.

By April 2001, most schools had begun teacher training, purchasing materials and planning and implementing intensive programs. Many schools reported significant early progress being made within their school buildings.

May 2001 - Reader Training

Training was consistent with Round 1 Training. In addition, readers were trained using the step-by-step guide and exemplars used by applicants. A number of Round 1 readers participated during the second round. These readers were re-trained and included in trial scoring practices. Overall, participants rated the reader training at a score of 4.5 out of 5 on the evaluation of content standards. Many commented that they appreciated the ongoing support. Another aspect that was highly rated was that of practice in scoring grants to help provide additional consistency among readers.

May 2001 - Reader Review

Eighty-four reviewers gathered to assess 212 Read-to-Achieve grant applications and make funding recommendations to the Read-to-Achieve Board. The groups were highly complimentary concerning having exemplar grants available during the process for

comparison. They also appreciated the added measure to help ensure inter-rater reliability and consistency.

September 2001 Networking Days

Two networking days were held in September 2001, one in Denver and another in Glenwood Springs The networking day is a requirement of the Read-to-Achieve grant with the intent to provide information on best practices, identify issues in implementation, and support networking of the participating schools. All 550 schools were represented. At these sessions, each participant was given a copy of the *Report of the National Reading Panel: Teaching Children*. This is an evidence-based assessment of the scientific research literature on reading and its implications for reading instruction.

Governor Owens provided the opening address. He was followed by national literacy expert Phyllis Hunter. A number of breakout sessions were available to participants. Topics included innovative practices for implementing the six dimensions of reading, noteworthy student achievement gains related to Read-to-Achieve efforts, and practical approaches to using data to drive change. A time was set aside for participants to network within regional groups about successes and concerns regarding implementation of intensive reading strategies.

There were approximately 850 participants at the Denver site and an additional 150 in Glenwood Springs. Highly rated components of the full day workshop were: keynote speakers, evaluation sessions, budget sessions, regional networking and breakout sessions. Participants wanted additional information dealing with English Language Learners (ELL).

Ongoing Role of Read-to-Achieve Board

The Read-to-Achieve Board has been instrumental in guiding all activities around the grant process. The Board was effective in assisting with the process of creating the grant application. The design of the Board allowed principals and teachers from both rural and urban settings as well as literacy experts, parents and legislators to have input into the document. Members of the Board attended the regional training sessions and participated as reviewers in the grant reading process. After grants were reviewed the Board met to examine recommendations for funding from the teams. They also completed additional review on consortium grants and reviewed appeals. Five appeals were received; one was granted.

When the Sounding Board around evaluation was created a Board member served on this committee to give input and bring information back to the Board. Board members also served on the committee to plan the Networking Day in September. One member of the Board presented a session on research-based literacy strategies during the Networking Day that was the highest rated session of the day.

The Board has meetings planned this year for the purpose of organizing next year's Networking Day, creating decision rules for continued funding based on external evaluation, and making funding decisions.

Part 2: Evaluation of Grant Program

Accountability

One of the main principles of the Read-to-Achieve program is to ensure accountability for the planned and actual use of the funds. By establishing a competitive grant process, policymakers emphasized the value to distributing funds to schools with well-designed programs that were focused on accomplishing specified objectives. Accountability for Read-to-Achieve grants has been addressed through a rigorous application and evaluation process and the reporting of program outcomes. The grant applications are scored based on information provided by the schools regarding:

- Student needs
- Program goals and evaluation mechanisms
- Planned use of funds to support students and teachers
- Indicators of success
- Budget cost-effectiveness and the ability to leverage other funds

To ensure that the programs achieve intended results, future funding is conditional on schools showing progress in their reading programs. By statute, schools awarded grants in the first period are eligible for funding in subsequent years if they achieve the goals set forth in their applications and demonstrate that a minimum of 25% of the pupils enrolled in the program in the prior year improved their reading skills.

Research Base for Read-to-Achieve

The accountability process for the Read-to-Achieve program revolves around Colorado Student Assessment Program (CSAP) data, the Colorado Basic Literacy Act (CBLA), and the research based on the six dimensions of reading documented in the *Report of the National Reading Panel – Teaching Children to Read* (2000).

The Colorado Student Assessment Program (CSAP) is a state assessment program designed to measure student achievement in relationship to the Colorado Model Content Standards. These standards are expectations specifying what students should know at particular points in their education. Assessment of reading occurs from grade 3 through grade 10. These results are used by the Read-to-Achieve program in assessing adequate progress related to 25% of students meeting the reading standard.

In Spring of 1996, the Colorado General Assembly passed House Bill 96-1139, Colorado's Basic Literacy Act (22-7-501 through 506 C.R.S.). The preamble to this Act states:

> *It is the intent of the General Assembly that, after third grade, no pupil may be placed at a grade level or other level of schooling that requires literacy skills not yet acquired by the pupil.*

This Act mandates that all students will be reading on the third grade level by the end of third grade and before they can move on to a fourth grade reading class. This Act requires that the reading growth of all students be monitored carefully from kindergarten

through third grade. Those students not reading on that grade level will be placed on Individual Literacy Plans (ILPs), which are developed with the school and the family.

District responsibilities include:

1. Assessing the reading performance of all students
2. Placing students on ILPs if students are not reading on grade level
3. Reporting to the state:
    a. The number and percentage of pupils in the third grade who read at or are above their grade level.
    b. The number and percentage of pupils enrolled in the district who are on ILPs.
    c. The number and percentage of pupils who have increased their literacy and reading comprehension levels by two or more grades during one year of instruction.

Best practices in literacy must serve as a foundation for all literacy work. All Read-to-Achieve grantees developed proposals based upon principles in the *Report of the National Reading Panel – Teaching Children to Read* which includes the 6 dimensions of reading: phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, building background and vocabulary, comprehension, and motivation. After a comprehensive needs assessment, each grant had to show how the school planned to implement each of the 6 dimensions. Schools developed achievement goals and action plans. The goals schools set had to be SMART (specific, measurable, attainable, research-based and time-phased).

External Evaluation

The statute requires the Read-to-Achieve program to report to the Governor and the General Assembly by February 1, 2004:

1. The number of schools that received grants under the program and the average amount of the grants;
2. The number of students enrolled in intensive literacy programs funded by the program, the number of pupils enrolled who improved their reading skills to grade level or achieved proficiency on the state assessment in reading for their grade level in the year after starting the intensive literacy program, and the percentage of students who achieved proficiency on the state assessment for reading for their grade level in both the year after starting the intensive literacy program and the following year; and
3. Whether any statutory changes are recommended, including but not limited to the appropriateness of the requirements for adequate progress.

The Department has contracted an external evaluator to implement a comprehensive evaluation that will address each of the statutory requirements. The use of an external evaluator avoids conflict of interest and assures necessary accountability. The evaluator has worked closely with the Read-to-Achieve Board to design an evaluation that allows the Board

(1) to make decisions about continued funding for the 550 schools, and
(2) to evaluate the overall effectiveness of programs used across the state.

Board decisions regarding continued funding are scheduled for June 2002 (the end of the first grant period).

The Read-to-Achieve evaluation focuses primarily on the following questions:

- How well did schools achieve the grant-specified achievement goals (25% improvement standard)?
- How well did schools achieve their other stated goals?
- What program characteristics describe those schools that did attain the achievement goals and those that did not?

Participants must submit five individual reports to meet evaluation requirements:

- Program Profile
- Implementation Survey
- Survey of Schools' Program Goals
- Achievement Data Tables
- Executive Summary/Suggestions for Others

Following is a timeline and brief description of the External Evaluation reports:

2001

September 26 or 28, 2001: Schools receive evaluation information at Networking Meetings

September 26 or 28, 2001: Schools complete **Program Profile** Forms (To highlight the important aspects of each program and provide data to help identify aspects of successful programs).

The **Program Profile** includes: Program Goals and Objectives, Program Structures, Instructional Strategies, Student Experiences, and Program Context and Support. This information will be reprinted and broadly shared, with information about the variety of Read-to-Achieve programs being implemented.

2002

May 15 (Early Decision Schedule) First opportunity for schools to submit materials for Board review and funding decisions regarding adequate progress during first grant period.

June 11 (Regular Decision Schedule) – Second opportunity for schools to submit materials for Board review and funding decisions regarding adequate progress during the first grant period. Materials received by CDE for funding decisions include:

- **Implementation Survey** – To provide information about program implementation and context for understanding program success.
- **Survey of Schools' Program Goals** – To provide needed information about attainment of each school's goals related to student achievement, professional development, and parent involvement as stated in the school's proposal.
- **Achievement Data Tables** – These tables present student information by grade level group (including assessment results, student characteristics, and program participation data) and complete the counts and calculations

needed for each participating grade level. These data will provide essential information about student achievement for program reviews related to funding and for subsequent analyses related to evaluation of program success.

September 15

- **Executive Summary** – A brief 2-page report summarizing programs and results for the *Summary of Read-to-Achieve programs* 2001/2002. These reports will be broadly disseminated.
- **Suggestions for Others** – A one page summary. Suggestions focus on identifying student or school needs, program goals and their evaluation, program components, and general suggestions. This will enable other schools and their students to benefit from program experiences of the Read-to-Achieve participants.

The parameter was set that each school would need to spend the equivalent of time equaling no more than 1% of the grant award on evaluation reporting. For example, for a $50,000 grant, this would equal 1-2 days.

Accountability – Sounding Board

To help produce an evaluation document that would fit the needs of the variety of Read-to-Achieve schools, a Sounding Board was created. The Sounding Board consisted of practitioners throughout the state who would be working directly with the Read-to-Achieve evaluation. The group was comprised of principals, teachers, assessment coordinators and grant coordinators. Each member brought a different perspective to the process. The Sounding Board met regularly throughout the summer 2001 to provide input and reaction to Read-to-Achieve evaluation documents. The group then participated in distribution and training of the materials during the September Networking Day.

Results of State Auditor's Review

During the 2000/2001 school year, programs within the Department of Education were reviewed by the State Auditor's Office. This performance audit of the Department was conducted under the authority of Section 2-3-103, C.R.S., which authorizes the State Auditor to conduct audits of all departments, institutions and agencies of state government. Read-to-Achieve was one of four CDE programs audited during this period. The audit work, which included gathering information through interviews, reviewing documents, and analyzing data, was performed between October 2000 and April 2001. Highlights of the recommendations and responses contained in the report provide additional evaluation data.

1. The audit pointed out that larger schools tended to be more successful in obtaining grant funds than smaller schools. Schools with more than 600 students were most successful in obtaining grants, while schools with 200 or fewer students were less successful.

In order to address this issue, meetings have been held with rural superintendents to identify additional means of addressing their needs during future grant distribution (especially targeted at districts with fewer than 300 students). A new process for reviewing schools with under 200 students is being implemented with the Department's latest grant (Teacher Development). The meetings with the rural superintendents have been highly productive. The audit recommendation of designating a certain amount of funding for the category of small rural districts is a primary option being considered.

Assistance (primarily targeted at small rural districts) during the second round of Read-to-Achieve grants included (a) a step-by-step guide to writing these grants and examples of successful grant components from the last grant review (from both small rural and urban applications) available at all of the 8 regional trainings and on the CDE website, (b) continued access to timely consultation in planning and writing the application, and (c) regional assistance through a focus on regional center consortium grant option as well as CDE regional team assistance.

Since February 2001, regular meetings have been held with rural superintendents to address their concerns regarding the data showing that fewer schools with student populations below 200 applied and fewer were successful. Many of the solutions above were derived from these interactions. In addition, the Department is establishing an Advisory Council of superintendents of small rural districts from each of the eight regions to meet quarterly to provide advise regarding necessary supports and procedures for distributing grants.

The Board and CDE are assuring that the Read-to-Achieve funding efforts are leveraged effectively with other funding sources for making sure students read by the end of third grade, e.g., federal Comprehensive School Reform Demonstration (CSRD), Colorado Reading Excellence Act (CREA) and Title I School Improvement grants plus expected increases in federal funds for reading grants. State level – Teacher Development grants.

CDE will also track schools that have not benefited from Read-to-Achieve funds by the beginning of the 2001-2002 school year (a) to make sure they have access to upcoming federal and state grant options and (b) to provide additional support through regional teams and Title I assistance.

The Read-to-Achieve Board and CDE will continue to focus on fair distribution of funds across regions in future funding cycles.

2. Another issue addressed during the audit was that because the grant process is competitive, funding is not distributed to all students who are eligible. Costs for administering the comprehensive grant process were also cited. A formula approach was suggested.

The Department disagreed with a formula approach on the basis of extensive research regarding formula-driven dollars through the federal Title I program. A majority of these funds have been used to fund literacy over a 20-year period. The critique regarding this

program is that dollars have not produced results for students. Data from the program have shown the need to provide accountability on both the front end of funding as well as through analysis of student results. Providing dollars to schools that do not have the leadership or organizational awareness in place for effective intervention, professional development, and parent involvement via a formula-driven mechanism has not worked.

Finally, research on the time necessary to produce change in student performance would support continuation of current funding during the next three years to schools that have met the quality expectations of the grant review. These schools across the state have been notified by the Read-to-Achieve Board that they were approved for three-year programs contingent on adequate progress.

In regard to costs, the Department is able to provide the comprehensive grant program activities, including training, support, review, and evaluation, for a cost within the 1% guideline.

3. The Audit suggested the Department of Education improve the application process for consortium applicants in the Read-to-Achieve program by developing a clear definition of a consortium and allowing schools within a consortium to submit one joint application rather than individual proposals.

CDE and the Read-to-Achieve Board will clarify the definition of consortium, follow the current 20 consortia applications closely, implement a combined consortium application for the state Teacher Development grants (November 2001) and use this same procedure with any future Read-to-Achieve fund distribution,. They will also explore the best mechanism for assuring that essential building analysis and planning occurs within the combined framework as this applies to future awards. Individual schools will still need to report results on meeting the 25% student performance expectations to qualify for continued funding.

4. The audit report also indicated the Department of Education should improve its communication with Read-to-Achieve applicants.

Although individualized feedback was provided to each of the 817 applicants, CDE and the Board will continue to work toward a more effective feedback process. During the second round of Read-to-Achieve funding, feedback was further refined to assure:

- Adequate clarity regarding program issues
- Clear representation of any budget issues
- Consistency of feedback across all applications
- Comments that assist next steps

See Attachment C for a sample feedback document.

5. Lastly, the audit committee recommended that the Department of Education should provide additional standardization of procedures to include an appeals process.

CDE and the Board have added an additional process for aligning team results. Each of the teams scoring grants during the second round of Read-to-Achieve grant distribution scored three identical applications. The external evaluator adjusted scores for each of the team's grants using a statistical procedure for alignment based on these results.

CDE and the Board included information concerning the appeals procedure for grants within each letter to unsuccessful applicants during the second round of distribution.

Review of Goal Accomplishments

Goal 1: Provide additional intensive reading services to all second and third graders on Individual Literacy Plans (ILPs) so that they will be proficient readers by the end of third grade.

- In progress. At present, 75% of the students on ILPs are receiving additional intensive reading services as a result of these grants. The rigorous application and evaluation process assures that effective research-based practices are in place for these students. Additional support is being provided to assist those schools not presently receiving grant funds.

Goal 2: Collect and review applications for Read-to-Achieve grants.

- Accomplished. The comprehensive process described in this report details the expectations, evaluation rubric, training, support, review process, and individualized feedback included in the review.

Goal 3: Recommend to the State Board of Education the schools that should receive grants as well as the duration and amount of each grant.

- Accomplished. Recommendations to the Board during the 2000/2001 school year included funding for 550 of schools (75% of the student population on ILPs) for a total of $14,895,687 of Tobacco Revenue from the Fiscal Year 2000/2001 Appropriation. Grants were funded for an initial 18-month period and for two additional years contingent on adequate progress. Table 1 on page 7 details the projected funding over the three year period.

Goal 4: Determine continued funding of grants based on adequate progress during granting period, e.g., grantee met the goals established in the grant application including demonstration that at least 25% of the students enrolled for the prior year met the reading standard.

- In progress. The evaluation design and instruments are in place. All grantees have received training in how to complete the evaluation expectations. Additional support is available from November 2001 through May 2002 to make sure each school completes the reporting requirements. Decisions regarding continued funding are scheduled for June 2002.

Goal 5: Report to the Governor and to the General Assembly on the effectiveness of the program by February 1, 2004.

- Pending. Data required to report to the Governor and General Assembly are being collected and analyzed by the external evaluator and CDE staff. This Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment annual report includes initial information on implementation and evaluation activities completed to date. In June 2002, data on local grant performance over the initial 18-month period will be submitted. Additional local data will be submitted Fall 2002. By November 2002, the second report to the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment will be submitted. By February 2003, the external evaluator will complete a comprehensive evaluation of the effectiveness of the Read-to-Achieve program during the initial 18-month period. By February 2004, the report to the Governor and General Assembly will be completed.

Read-to-Achieve Board Commitments/Concerns

Three key issues remain a concern for the Board

- Meeting the three-year expectations for funding the schools in the Read-to-Achieve program. The Board intends to use the dollars available from the Tobacco settlement funds through the 2003-2004 school year to meet the Board's commitment to fund Read-to-Achieve schools that are making adequate progress. Providing the time for schools to make significant changes in programming and student performance is essential.

- Implementing a timely and thorough evaluation and review process by June 2002 based on the design developed by the external evaluator. Effective implementation of this design will result in clear decisions by the Board about continued funding and appropriate feedback to all 550 participating schools.

- Making sure technical assistance for planning intensive instruction for reading achievement is easily accessible to those schools that need it. The Board will work with CDE staff on the Regional Education Teams as well as Regional Title I Consultants to make sure effective assistance reaches schools not presently benefiting from these funds.

Summary of Primary Accomplishments 2000/2001

- Implemented the largest school-based grant effort ever undertaken in Colorado. Provided regional technical assistance and support across the state. Over 800 elementary schools applied for these funds. 550 of these schools (75% of the student population on ILPs) were successful.

- Used a comprehensive review process involving 222 trained reviewers from across Colorado with expertise in reading and school-based reform to make sure research-based programs were in place in funded schools.

- Provided detailed feedback to all 817 applicants for these funds.

- Provided extensive support in planning and implementing intensive reading instruction through regional trainings, web-based support, timely consultation, and step-by-step guides.

- Began work with superintendents from small rural districts to make sure the Read-to-Achieve funds are readily accessible for their student populations.

- Developed an external evaluation model that answers the essential questions required by legislation, provides clear expectations for grantees, works within a parameter of using no more than 1% of the budgeted time from each grant, and provides support structures for completing evaluation requirements.

Colorado State Board of Education
Department of Education

1 Colorado Code of Regulations 301-47

Adopted: October 5, 2000
Amended:
Attorney General Opinion: October 13, 2000

Authority: Article IX, Section 1, Colorado Constitution. 22-2-106(1)(a) and (c); 22-2-107(1)(c); 22-7-409(1.5); 22-7-601 et seq.; and 22-7-506, Colorado Revised Statutes (C.R.S.)

RULES

FOR THE ADMINISTRATION OF

THE READ TO ACHIEVE GRANT PROGRAM

2207-R-1.00 Statement of Basis and Purpose.

The statutory basis for these Rules adopted October 5, 2000, is found in 22-2-106(1)(a) and (c), State Board Duties; 22-2-107(1)(c), State Board Powers; and 22-7-506, the Read to Achieve Grant Program, C.R.S.

The Read to Achieve Grant Program, 22-7-506, C.R.S., requires the State Board of Education to promulgate rules which include, but are not limited to: application procedures by which a school may apply for grant funds through this program, criteria for selecting those schools that shall receive grants, the criteria for determining the amount to be granted to the selected schools, and procedures for reviewing the success of the intensive literacy programs operated by schools that receive grants.

2207-R-2.00 Definitions.

2.01 (1) Read to Achieve Grant Program.

A grant program created in the Department of Education pursuant to 22-7-506, C.R.S., allowing any public school to

apply for grants to fund intensive, research-based reading programs for second and third grade pupils and pupils between third and fourth grades whose literacy and reading comprehension skills are below the level established by the State Board of Education for pupils at each grade level.

2.01 (2) Read to Achieve Board.

An advisory board to the State Board of Education created pursuant to 22-7-506 (2)(a) and (3)(a), C.R.S. The advisory board's membership and terms of office are defined in 22-7-506 (2)(a), C.R.S. The Read to Achieve Board's major duties include the solicitation and review of applications for grants under this program and recommending to the State Board of Education those public schools that should receive grants under this program and the duration and amount of each grant pursuant to these Rules.

2.01 (3) State Board of Education.

An elected board established pursuant to Section 1, Article IX of the State Constitution.

2.01 (4) Public School.

A school that receives a majority of its funding from moneys raised by a general state, county, or district tax and whose property is owned and operated by a political subdivision of the state.

2.01 (5) Levels of Literacy and Reading Comprehension Skills.

The proficiency levels established pursuant to 2.01 (6), 2.02 (1), (2) and (3) of these Rules and the Rules for the Administration of the Colorado Basic Literacy Act, adopted in May of 1997 by the State Board of Education in compliance with 22-7-501 – 505, C.R.S.

2.01 (6) Colorado Department of Education (CDE) – Request for Proposal (RFP) Development Process
The processes and procedures developed by CDE to ensure that all RFP's are consistent with the appropriate funding source, adhere to appropriate statutory requirements, and support the organizational commitment of CDE.

2207-R-2.02 Implementation Procedures.

2.02 (1) Application Procedures.

CDE will be the responsible agency for implementing the Read to Achieve Grant Program. CDE will develop a request for proposal (RFP), pursuant to CDE's RFP process and pursuant to the requirements and timelines found in 22-7-506, C.R.S.

2.02 (2) Criteria and Levels of Reading and Literacy Comprehension Skills.

The RFP to be developed by CDE must support and be congruent with the Rules for the Administration of the Colorado Basic Literacy Act adopted by the State Board of Education in May of 1997. The RFP shall set high, but attainable levels of literacy and reading comprehension skills for each eligible grade using the following assessments which are a part of the Rules for the Administration of the Colorado Basic Literacy Act. Both eligibility for initial funding and continued funding status will be based on levels of reading and comprehension skills on the following assessments:

2.02 (2)(a) Individual Literacy Plan (ILP) status as defined in the RFP developed pursuant to 2.02 (1) of these Rules.

2.02 (2)(b) Third grade Colorado Student Assessment Program (CSAP) results as defined in the RFP developed pursuant to 2.02 (1) of these Rules.

2.02 (2)(c) An individual reading assessment defined in the RFP developed pursuant to 2.02 (1) of these Rules.

2.02 (3) Year Two and Three Funding.

Year two and three funding shall be contingent upon assessment results demonstrating that at least twenty-five percent of the pupils enrolled in the intensive reading program for the full twelve months within the prior twelve month period improved their reading skills to at least grade level or achieved proficiency on the assessments defined in 2.02 (2) of these Rules.

2.02 (4) Evaluation of Program.

The Colorado Department of Education will contract with an independent evaluator to conduct an annual evaluation of the program. Results will be disseminated to the State Board of Education, the Read to Achieve Board, the Governor, and all Colorado school districts and BOCES as well as other interested parties.

Attachment B

Read to Achieve Board
August 2000

Senator John Andrews	Colorado State Senate, District 27
Karen Brown, Teacher with Reading Expertise	Pueblo City School District 60 (Bessemer Elementary)
Pat Chlouber, State Board Member	Colorado State Board of Education (Title I Teacher, Lake County)
Laura "Gail" Coleman, Third Grade ElementaryTeacher	Jefferson County School District R-1 (Bear Creek Elementary)
Karen Durica, Literacy Coordinator, Elementary Expertise	Douglas County Public Schools
Darlene Medina, Third Grade Teacher, Rural District	Del Norte School District
William J. Moloney, Commissioner of Education	Colorado Department of Education
Terri Rayburn, Parent	Jefferson County
*Shirley Squier, Retired Principal, Rural Elementary	Canon City
Representative Abel Tapia	Colorado House of Representatives, District 46
**John Youngquist, Principal, Urban Elementary	Denver Public Schools (Newlon Elementary)

*Replaced by Sheryl Weitzel, Eaton School District
**Will be replaced by new principal at Urban Elementary, name to be announced

Read to Achieve Comments
June 2001

Grant Proposal **School**
LEA **Region**

Summary of Strengths/Areas Not Addressed, Incomplete, or Insufficiently Clear

Listed below are the expectations from Level 3 of the Read to Achieve Scoring Rubric. The boxes checked represent the primary areas in which readers noted areas not addressed, incomplete, or insufficiently clear.

Component 1: Needs Assessment

X	Clearly indicates reading needs of all students eligible to be served based upon a comprehensive analysis of disaggregated academic performance data.
X	Clearly addresses CBLA criteria.
X	Clearly indicates the professional development needs of teachers and other staff in the area of reading instruction based upon thorough analysis of needs assessment data.

Strengths:

- Needs for teacher training were recognized.

Suggestions:

- Provide disaggregated data on student reading needs based upon CBLA criteria.
- Provide clear evidence of assessment of teacher needs based upon student needs assessment data in reading.

Component 2: Goals/Evaluation of the Proposed Program

X	Details goals consistent with the stated purposes of the program that fully meet the SMART expectations.
	Includes measurable indicators of success for each goal with detail on how measured (measurement tools).
X	Clearly addresses each of the CBLA expectations regarding use of literacy assessment data.
	Provides for disaggregation of results within the expectations for student performance.
X	Provides credible plan for assuring valid and reliable data.

Suggestions:

- Develop specific goals that relate directly to identified student and staff needs.
- Write measurable student achievement goals, based on CBLA expectations.
- Provide for disaggregated student achievement results.
- Provide a plan for assuring that the data you are obtaining is valid and reliable. A body of evidence does not assure validity and reliability.

Component 3: Research-based Plan of Action

	Details specific action plan that fully addresses each of the four elements.
	Anchors actions within plan to strategies proven successful.
	Fully addresses implementation of **allowable activities.**

3a. Intensive Instruction

X	Includes convincing evidence of attention to the six dimensions of reading, necessary integration with regular classroom instruction, and inclusion of sufficient time.
	Clearly indicates rationale for choices of instruction.

3b. Support for Teachers

X	Details plan with effective results-based professional development for the program.
X	Exemplifies *Guidelines for Professional Development* and fully addresses the four essential elements.

3c. Parent/Family Involvement

X	Fully addresses provision of appropriate family literacy services.
	Indicates an exemplary plan for providing training and materials for parents.

3d. Sustaining Impact

	Clearly addresses how impact of funds will extend beyond duration of grant.
X	Fully addresses effective coordination of grant activities and resources (as appropriate).
	Provides evidence of clear commitments of external resources (including benefits of consortium where appropriate).

Strengths:

- All four elements have been addressed in an effective plan for action.
- Student Success Teams are a good concept.
- Parents are actively involved at home in student reading interventions.

Suggestions:

- Explain how data-driven strategies will direct explicit classroom instruction in reading.
- Although you mention the *Guidelines for Professional Development*, you do not explain how they will be integrated into your plan.
- Identify specifically how activities of the grant will be coordinated.

Component 4: Capacity for Success

	Provides convincing evidence that the school and/or consortium is likely to succeed.
X	Builds a strong case for how the five elements listed above will support success of effort.
	Clearly addresses how successful practices and strategies derived from this program will be integrated into the ongoing operation of the school.

Strengths:

- All five elements are addressed.

Suggestion:

- Provide stronger assurance that the school is committed to the activities of this proposal.

Component 5: Cost-Effective Budget

X	Includes a cost-effective budget for between 1 and 3 years with appropriate narrative and line item descriptions for activities.
	Provides a clear picture of leveraging dollars from various funding streams to enhance effects of effort.
X	Indicates effective plan for continuation of reform efforts after funds have expired.

Suggestions:

- Provide more detailed information on the supplies/materials allocation.
- Describe how you will obtain the resources to continue the grant activities after the funding has ceased.